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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PNUC](#) [ETTC](#) [IAEA](#) [IR](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: QATARI MFA OFFICIAL OFFERS ADVICE ON POST-NIE
DEALINGS WITH IRAN

REF: A. STATE 165967
[1](#)B. STATE 162558

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Michael A. Ratney,
for reasons 1,4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: U.S. Representative to the IAEA Ambassador Gregory Schulte briefed MFA Assistant Minister for Follow-Up Affairs Al-Rumaihi December 11 on the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iran and U.S. policy toward Tehran in the wake of it. As Qatar prepares to leave the UN Security Council at the end of December, Schulte briefed on the steps on a new UNSCR against Iran that would be taken before the end of the year. Al-Rumaihi responded that China's concurrence with any new UNSCR was key, as was addressing the concerns of countries bordering Iran that relied on Iranian ports to export their goods. He also said any new sanctions should be portrayed as an inducement for Iranian cooperation on behalf of the international community. Al-Rumaihi agreed with Schulte that Iran's uranium enrichment program, and overall nuclear weapons program, remained on track to produce nuclear weapons in the future if Iran chose to do so. Only the timeline, in Qatar's view, remained in question. Al-Rumaihi said Iran sought an invitation for its president to attend the December 3-4 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Doha, but his attendance did not mean the GCC and Iran were increasing their cooperation. On the contrary, Al-Rumaihi said it was not in the GCC's interest to cement ties with Iran. On a positive note, Al-Rumaihi said Saudi King Abdullah's summit attendance led to the expectation in Doha that Saudi Arabia would soon post an ambassador to Qatar. End Summary.

Schulte's Brief on Iran's Nuclear Program

[1](#)2. (C) U.S. Representative to the IAEA and Ambassador to UN Organizations in Vienna Gregory Schulte, accompanied by Charge and P/E Chief, met December 11 with MFA Assistant Minister for Follow-Up Affairs Mohammed Al-Rumaihi. Al-Rumaihi opened by expressing appreciation for Schulte's visit and the opportunity to hear current U.S. views on the Iranian nuclear threat. Schulte briefed Al-Rumaihi on the recently released National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) and current U.S. thinking on Iran. Schulte noted that upon the release of the NIE, it seemed everyone paid attention to the first sentence of the key judgments: "We judge with high confidence that Tehran in the fall of 2003 halted its nuclear weapons program." Schulte admitted this was a significant finding but said the NIE contained much more. It also stated that the U.S. intelligence community had higher confidence than before that Iran had a military-led nuclear weapons program under the direction of the political leadership. This program, stressed Schulte, Iran had yet to acknowledge to the IAEA. It was the intelligence community's judgment

that Iran stopped the program in 2003 under international pressure and out of fear of being caught and exposed to the world. Iran, he continued, could restart the program at any time. In the meantime, Iran continued to work on creating fissile material, especially highly enriched uranium.

13. (C) Enriched uranium clearly would not be used for civilian purposes in the Iranian context, noted Schulte, since Iran had no nuclear plants requiring it. The only possible explanation of the enrichment program's existence was the need for enriched uranium for nuclear weapons. Another worry, laid out in the NIE, was the Iranian government's retaining the option, deliberately, of producing a weapon. It was the judgment of the U.S. intelligence community, said Schulte, that Iran could produce a weapon early-to-mid next decade should the program halted in 2003 resume. In sum, underscored Schulte, there was good news and bad news in the NIE. Iran shut down its nuclear program in 2003 but continues to develop the capacity to enrich uranium, which was the "long pole in the tent" of a nuclear weapons program.

Next Steps in UNSC and with IAEA

14. (C) Schulte said President Bush believed it was important to declassify the NIE and share its conclusions with our partners. What does this mean for policy? The dual-track approach with our European partners of offering Iran diplomatic incentives for good behavior but at the same time ratcheting up diplomatic and financial pressure was still needed. Iran had to come clean to the IAEA on all its past nuclear activities. IAEA Director General Mohammed

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ElBaradei, said Schulte, had told him when Schulte briefed him on the NIE that ElBaradei was more convinced than before of the need for Iran to acknowledge all past activities. The IAEA, Schulte noted, needed the international community to tell Iran clearly that full transparency was its only option. The U.S., as a result, would continue to push for sanctions in the UNSC and for full disclosure of all past and present Iranian nuclear activities.

15. (C) Schulte noted that some in the international community hoped that positive reports from EU High Representative Solana and the IAEA's ElBaradei about Iran would lessen the pressure for additional sanctions against Iran. Iran disappointed them by not cooperating fully in each venue. Schulte noted that Solana reported no progress. In fact, Solana said that, if possible, there had been less progress in this meeting than in the last year. ElBaradei's most recent report was also not positive, added Schulte. As a result, Schulte said it was possible that the U.S. would seek a new UNSC resolution seeking to tighten travel and financial restrictions on key Iranian officials. Perhaps, added Schulte, the draft resolution would contain additional measures on Iranian export credits and arms trade. Enforcing implementation of the sanctions might be another provision.

Qatar: China, Iran's Neighbors Key

16. (C) Al-Rumaihi thanked Schulte for his extensive overview and said it was important that China be on board for any new resolution. According to Al-Rumaihi, Chinese trade with Iran was increasing. China preferred to pay for the 1.5 million barrels of oil it imported from Iran daily with goods, as opposed to cash. China, said Al-Rumaihi, was focused on its bilateral relationship with Iran at this time and would not "be moving strategically into the (Middle East) region before 2020." Besides China, Al-Rumaihi noted other countries trading with Iran had to be taken into account. Pakistan, for one, wanted to increase exports to Iran. The small

countries on the Iranian border, likewise said Al-Rumaihi, were of concern because they needed to trade with Iran to retain the privilege of using Iranian ports for the export of their own goods. Of course, added Al-Rumaihi, Iran wants to overcome any economic embargo.

Sanctions as Inducement to Change Iran's Behavior

17. (C) Al-Rumaihi observed that a new Security Council resolution might push Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA. In any event, he cautioned, a new resolution should not be billed as punishment of Iran. Rather, it should be portrayed as trying to gain Iranian cooperation and bringing Iran into compliance with its international obligations on behalf of the international community. Schulte said the U.S. sought change in Iranian behavior and had nothing against the Iranian people. He underscored the importance of convincing Iran to suspend its pursuit of uranium enrichment capabilities. Al-Rumaihi agreed, observing that the enrichment program remained on track and that a resolution was necessary to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons in the future. Only the timeline, Al-Rumaihi said, remained in question.

Iran Sought President's Invitation to GCC Summit

18. (C) Asked for insights into the Iranian position from President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to Doha for the December 3-4 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) heads of state summit, Al-Rumaihi said the GCC states were unsure of Iranian intentions. Since Ahmadinejad came to power, he had tried to consolidate his position, including by replacing a large number of government officials, since his policy direction is very different from his predecessor. Ahmadinejad sought an invitation to the summit, explained Al-Rumaihi, because Iran sought to reinforce its position and cooperation vis-a-vis the Gulf. Reiterating that Ahmadinejad's participation in the GCC summit was an Iranian initiative and noting that Turkey and other regional countries were invited, Al-Rumaihi said Iran had sought to sign treaties on different subjects, mostly economic, with every GCC country.

Not in GCC Interest to Increase Cooperation

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19. (C) According to Al-Rumaihi, big differences remained between the GCC states and Iran, and no agreements are likely to be signed anytime soon. Aside from the economic considerations, the GCC members considered Iranian behavior in Iraq not helpful. Qatar's vision of Iraq, stressed Al-Rumaihi, was certainly not shared by Iran. Al-Rumaihi said PM Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al Thani had also made this point alongside U.S. Defense Secretary Gates in a recent meeting held in Bahrain. Asked if Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons came up in the Doha meetings, Al-Rumaihi said the GCC leaders did not want that issue to be discussed. It was not in the GCC's interests, according to Al-Rumaihi, to move forward on Iranian cooperation with the GCC or cement ties. Schulte asked if Al-Rumaihi had any insights into Iranian reaction to Saudi proposals on uranium enrichment. Al-Rumaihi responded that there was much media speculation about Iranian cooperation with Gulf states, but the bottom line was that Iran was no more interested in cooperating with regional states than it was with Russia on enriching uranium outside of Iran.

Improvement in Qatar-Saudi Relations

¶10. (C) Wrapping up the discussion on the GCC summit, Al-Rumaihi said the most positive outcome of the summit was that all GCC heads of state attended the meeting in Doha. Qatar, he noted, was often known for being at odds with the states of the region, so this was a big achievement. Al-Rumaihi characterized the climate of the leaders' meetings as "warm". He said this was especially true with respect to the relations between Saudi King Abdullah and Qatar's Amir. Asked by Charge if Qatar expected Saudi Arabia to send an ambassador to Qatar to cement the warming relations, Al-Rumaihi said this was indeed the case.

Qatar Rotates off the Security Council

¶11. (C) Turning to the end of Qatar's tenure on the UN Security Council, Al-Rumaihi expressed relief and sadness that Qatar would finish its term December 31. Qatar, noted Al-Rumaihi, suffered from taking positions on matters that ordinarily would not concern it. In this respect, leaving the Council was a relief. At the same time, Qatar appreciated the opportunity to play a role at the highest level of the international system and represent the interests of the Asian group in the UNSC. The end of this opportunity was a cause for some sadness. Schulte responded that Qatar took its role on the Security Council seriously and noted that important decisions are never easy.

¶12. (C) Al-Rumaihi said he would be remiss in not noting that Qatar's experience on the UN Security Council affirmed its perspective that reform of the UNSC membership was necessary in order to increase regional perspectives. Al-Rumaihi said transparency was very important to the work of the Council, and he encouraged the P-5 to be more inclusive in its work. Perhaps, remarked Al-Rumaihi, Qatar surprised the P-5 by insisting on a greater role for the "sixth player" on the team.

¶13. (U) UNVIE has cleared this message.
RATNEY